

METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR AMPLIFYING ADVERTISEMENTS

Background to the Invention

The present invention relates to a method and a system for facilitating the retrieval by consumers of further information 5 relating to products and/or services advertised via a medium such as television, radio, and the press.

Television advertisements are necessarily short and punchy. Further information is normally advertised as being available from the company's website, brochure etc.

10 The first time one sees an advertisement it is difficult to remember the information conveyed about the product or service, let alone the contact number or website.

In a period of viewing a multiplicity of websites, contact numbers will be advertised, all easily forgotten.

15 Even if web site addresses are remembered it is frequently the case that the address given is that of the company website and does not bear any relation to the particular promotion.

Website addresses, even when remembered are easily misspelled or have the wrong suffix. It is also possible to find oneself 20 viewing an unofficial or fraudulent website instead of the desired official website.

Often, advertisements are entertaining in themselves and it would frequently be interesting to know the title of the accompanying music or the location.

Summary of the Invention

It is an object of the invention to provide a one-stop website for information on all advertised products.

It is a further object of the invention to provide a database
5 of information concerning advertisements themselves.

Accordingly, the present invention provides a method of facilitating the retrieval of information concerning products and/or services provided by a plurality of mutually unrelated providers, comprising providing a single internet site
10 including means for retrieving said information, said internet site being accessible by consumers, and the address of said internet site optionally being included in each of a plurality of advertisements for the respective products and/or services.

15 In the preferred embodiment of the inventive method, the information retrieval means operates when a consumer identifies a brand name or, for example by means of one or more keywords, part of the content of an advertisement. If the consumer's input is specific, only information concerning the specific
20 product or service is retrieved, i.e. the hyperlinks are "tight". If the consumer's input is not specific to one advertisement, product or service, then information concerning a range of products and/or services is retrieved.

The providers subscribe to the internet site and may be charged
25 for the subscription. Having subscribed, the providers may optionally include information identifying said internet site, such as the address thereof, in their advertisements.

Said means for retrieving the information may comprise a plurality of hyperlinks to websites of the providers, i.e. said
30 internet site may comprise a portal. Alternatively or

additionally, said internet site may include information concerning the products and services.

In the most preferred embodiment, a consumer wishing to retrieve said information is required to input personal details including at least his or her name and e-mail address, and said details are added to a database. Preferably, consumers in the database are categorized according to their products or services of interest.

Preferably, the method includes presenting any consumer attempting to retrieve information from a non-subscribing provider with a range of products or services similar to a product or service of said non-subscribing provider, said similar products or services being advertised by subscribing providers. Said range could comprise a ranking of products or services based on levels of charges levied to the subscribing providers. Non-subscribing providers are preferably informed, for example by e-mail, when there have been potential customers looking for their product or service.

The present invention also provides a system for facilitating the retrieval of information concerning products and/or services provided by a plurality of mutually unrelated providers, comprising a single internet site, the address of which internet site may be included in each of a plurality of advertisements for the respective products and/or services, said internet site being accessible by consumers and including means for retrieving said information.

Said advertisements may include television advertisements, radio advertisements, and advertisements in printed media.

Preferably, said internet site further includes means for retrieving information concerning categories of products and/or services provided by all subscribing providers.

Advantageously, said internet site further includes information
5 relating to one of more of the advertisements themselves.

Said information may include music titles, hyperlinks to stores to buy a recording of the theme tune, hyperlinks to stores to purchase a product shown incidentally in the advertisement as an accessory, filming locations and hyperlinks to websites
10 advertising holidays in said filming locations.

Said internet site may even comprise downloadable files comprising complete copies of the advertisements.

It will thus be seen that the invention provides a valuable means of generating direct sales of products and services
15 advertised via various media.

Revenue is immediately obtainable from advertisers and linked sites. Additionally, the internet site of the invention will be a popular website so it can host its own advertising.

Preferably, the system of the invention includes a database
20 comprising personal details including at least the names and e-mail addresses of consumers who have retrieved information, the database being categorized according to the products and/or services which said information concerns. This will give an extremely powerful marketing database.

25 Brief Description of the Drawing

In order that the present invention may be more readily understood, a particular embodiment thereof will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the

accompanying drawing, the single figure of which is a block diagram of a system according to the invention.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment

In this example, a system for facilitating information retrieval comprises a website 1 having a particular address. The website includes information retrieval means 2 comprising hyperlinks 3 to a number of sites belonging to subscribing advertisers of products and services.

In order to subscribe to the website, an advertiser or advertising agency or other person or company uses a password to access the website and is presented with an on-screen form. This form enables the subscriber to input information relating to their advertisements, such as the name of the product or service, the category of the produce or service, the date and circumstances of the presentation of the advertisement, the identity of the creator of the advertisement, details of the theme music, location etc, one or more pictures of the advertisement and keywords describing the content of the advertisement.

Subscribing advertisers may be invited to include the address of the website 1 in their advertisements 4, for example stating that further information is available from the website. However, it is not essential that the address of the website 1 is included in the advertisements 4. As an alternative, a logo or other means may be used to identify the website 1. Indeed, no identification at all is necessary. However, if subscribers are charged, in order to encourage them to identify the website 1 in their advertisements 4, those doing so could be charged a lower amount than those who do not.

If a consumer sees a product advertised that he or she finds interesting but is unable to remember details of the product, even after the first viewing the consumer can access the website 1, where he or she will be reminded and full details
5 can be found. It is unnecessary to remember the particular product's web site address or even its brand name or category - these can always be found at the website 1, as long as some key information identifying the advertisement is remembered, matching the keywords previously uploaded in association with
10 the respective advertisement.

Thus the website 1 provides a means for locating an advertisement when only very little thereof is remembered, as commonly occurs.

Advertisers not subscribing to the website 1 are at a
15 significant disadvantage when compared to those in the same product category who have subscribed. If a consumer looks for a non-subscribing advertiser the information retrieval means 2 will present him or her with a range of similar products being advertised by subscribers (there is a ranking in this range,
20 based on fees charged to the subscribers). Non-subscribers will be e-mailed that there have been potential customers looking for their product.

A consumer searching for a particular category of product, for example a car, is able to log on to the website 1 to see all
25 the cars currently being advertised.

Additionally the site includes a part 5 giving information 6 about the advertisements themselves (often as appealing as the products). The advertisement information 6 may include music titles, links to stores to buy a recording of the theme tune
30 and/or links to stores to purchase a product shown incidentally

in the advertisement as an accessory. Filming locations and links to package holidays in the area can also be provided.

Providing copyright is satisfied, a visitor can also download, from part 5, files 7 embodying complete copies of the 5 advertisements 4 onto DVD for his or her own entertainment.

In a history section 8 of part 5 famous advertisements will be available, many of which are artworks in their own right, with associated information and downloading ability.

The most valuable part of the business of the invention is 10 likely to be its consumer database 9. Subscribers wishing to see product details will be asked for their name and e-mail address, as a minimum, which will be logged on the database 9 neatly segregated by category of product chosen.

The invention is not limited to the specific embodiment which 15 has been described above, and modifications thereto, which do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the following claims, will readily occur to those skilled in the art.